

# HOWELL'S SPECTACULAR THELYPODY

*Thelypodium howellii* ssp. *spectabilis*



## LISTED AS THREATENED

**T**he U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) listed Howell's spectacular thelypody as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) on June 25, 1999. Species listed as threatened are likely to become endangered throughout all or a significant portion of their range in the foreseeable future.

## HISTORICAL STATUS AND CURRENT TRENDS

**H**owell's spectacular thelypody is found in eastern Oregon's Baker and Powder River valleys. It was considered possibly extinct until it was rediscovered in 1980. Currently, the species is limited to 11 known sites in the vicinity of Baker, Haines, and North Powder. Due to a variety of threats such as loss or changes in habitat resulting from land use changes, hydrological alterations, and grazing, the populations are at risk of extirpation.

## HABITAT

**P**lants grow in valley bottoms and wet meadow areas. These areas are generally alkaline, and may contain a variety of shrubs such as greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*). Other frequently associated species include: giant wild rye (*Elymus cinereus*), alkali saltgrass (*Distichlis stricta*), and alkali bluegrass (*Poa juncifolia*). Sites range from 3,000- to 3,500-feet elevation.

## LIFE HISTORY

**a** member of the Mustard family, Howell's spectacular thelypody are typically 1- to 2-foot tall biennials that live for up to 2 years. Plants usually occur in low-lying areas where sufficient moisture and other habitat characteristics are favorable for growth and survival. Plants have small leaves clustered at the base of the stem, and showy, pink-to-purplish flowers in a loose spike at the end of the stem. Plants occur at 11 disjunct sites, in a combined habitat area of about 100 acres.

Many relatives of this species in the Mustard family have tremendous economic importance as food crops (e.g., cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage and broccoli) and as ornamentals (e.g., alyssum and peppergrass). The potential for agricultural, ornamental, or medicinal uses for this species has not yet been investigated.

